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'In whose name? And in whose image?' Unearthing the hidden curriculum of approaches to 'access' and 'equity' in higher education

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'In whose name? And in whose image?

UNEARTHING THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM
OF APPROACHES TO
'ACCESS' AND 'EQUITY' IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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29 June 2018

'EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION' INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL



Abstract

Simmering below the surface of the distinctions between **access** and **equity** in higher education, is the hidden curriculum which serves to socialize and construct individuals, their communities and knowledge(s), nationally, globally and within the margins.

In this talk, **educational development** is read as a site where global, national and institutional priorities, interests, and pressures are negotiated, against the recognition of what is valued for equity purposes. We'll touch on US, UK and South African discourses in relation to access for students.

In the process, we'll unpack the ways in which institutions of higher education create the conditions for **equality in their academic faculty.**

'access' ?

'equity'?

"access has come to be understood as enrolling larger percentages of the population who desire higher education; equity requires that these opportunities are equally available to all citizens".

Reisberg, L., & Watson, D. (2010). Access and Equity. In P. Altbach (Ed.), *Leadership for World - Class Universities: Challenges for Developing Countries* (p. 1–36 (not indicated)). Chestnut Hill: Boston College. Retrieved from

http://www.gr.unicamp.br/ceav/revista/content/pdf/Watson_Reisberg-Access_and_Equity_en.pdf

Equity

- associated with fairness or justice in the provision of education or other benefits and it takes individual circumstances into consideration

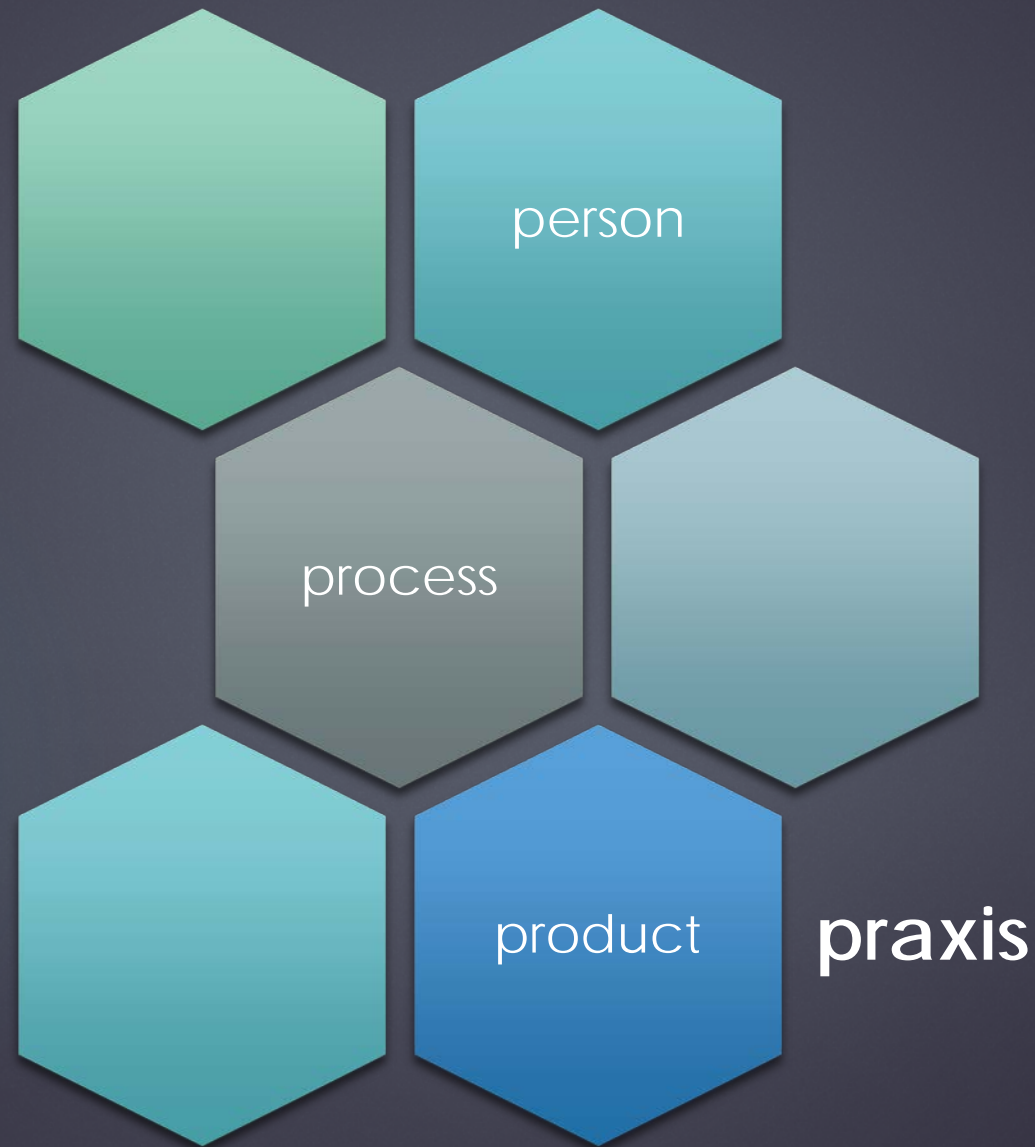
Equality

- usually connotes sameness in treatment by asserting the fundamental or natural equality of all persons

US	UK	South Africa
Race Ethnicity Class Gender <u>meritocracy</u>	Social background 'equality' = class 'inclusivity' = ability; sexual orientation 'diversity' = ethnicity/ Race 'equality' = gender	Race Gender Class equity as a historical necessity towards equality
Differentiated system Selection vs Open	Differentiated System Teaching vs research	Resistance to differentiated system
Social mobility of the individual	Social mobility of the individual	Social justice for community

David, ME 2004, 'Equality and Equity in Higher Education: Learning to Develop New Paradigms from the US Experience?', *European Educational Research Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 813–819. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.2304/eerj.2004.3.4.8>

Conceptualising 'curriculum'



'Curriculum Theory'

Learning encounters play a direct role in **social formation**

The implications of such social formation for critical citizenry and democracy



STRUCTURAL ACCESS

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

ACCESS TO CHALLENGE

STRUCTURAL ACCESS

Should a person's social location be part of the concern for their admission to HE?

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Recognising that there was not an equal playing field before admission, what should be in place to support learning where 'deficits' exists in the student?

Recognising that the system itself is made for those with certain cognitive capital, what should be put in place to change teaching?

Recognising that the system itself is was made by those with certain cultural & social capital, what should be put in place to change teaching?

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Diversity

OBE

Support

Student deficit

Add ons

Assessment
transparency
fairness

Systemic
Transformation:
Access to
Knowledge

Epistemological
access

Capital
habitus

Transition
belonging
inclusion
community

Disciplinary
knowledge
construction &
representation

Ontological
turn

Being and
becoming:
Knowers

Mentorship
assimilation

STRUCTURAL ACCESS

Should a person's social location be part of the concern for their admission to HE?

South Africa

57,169,305 pop

Racial Categories in SA	Percentage (2011 consensus)	Numerical value
Black Africans	79.2%	41 million
Coloured	8.9%	4.62 million
Indian or Asian	2.5%	1.29 million
White	8.9%	4.59 million

black' students

14%

First generation students 78%

isiZulu 22.7%, isiXhosa 16%, Afrikaans 13.5%, English 9.6%, Sepedi 9.1%, Setswana 8%, Sesotho 7.6%, Xitsonga 4.5%, siSwati 2.5%, Tshivenda 2.4%, isiNdebele 2.1%.



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Racial Categories in SA	Percentage (2011 consensus)	Numerical value
Black Africans	79.2%	41 million
Coloured	8.9%	4.62 million
Indian or Asian	2.5%	1.29 million
'White' academics	53.2%	4.59 million

From the research project 'Considering the reception of equity-agenda development programmes by its recipients in a rapidly transforming higher education context' Dr Dina Belluigi (Queen's University Belfast) with Dr Gladman Thondhlana (Rhodes University, South Africa)

[Video overview](#)

Numerical diversity
“tokens”

Superficial diversity
“window dressing”



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“I merely had to be **hired** into a previously untransformed space for the space to be considered transformed, and that was all the transformation they were willing to undergo.”

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

Recognising that there was not an equal playing field before admission, what should be in place to support learning where 'deficits' exists in the student?

Recognising that the system itself is made for those with certain cognitive capital, what should be put in place to change teaching?

Recognising that the system itself is was made by those with certain cultural & social capital, what should be put in place to change teaching?

'deficit' creates a dichotomy

“implicitly assumes and implies that those staff members (mostly white) who don't go through the program are ready to teach in a rapidly transforming high education landscape”



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'deficit' creates a debt of gratitude

*“very fortunate” “very lucky”
“protected” “shielded”*



“I ought to be grateful for even getting my foot in the door”

“I had to constantly fight to exist and to be the agent of my growth as an academic. Having to constantly express gratitude required me to consider myself as otherwise underqualified and undeserving of the space I now occupied. This was a relatively difficult place to inspire fellow colleagues and students from.”

politics of development

“Such characterization is insulting, demeaning and in some cases dehumanizing... How do you challenge those in power and certain ways of thinking about the meaning of transformation if you are coming from a position of inferiority?”



politics of development

“training the dog”


deficit

diversity

inclusion

belonging


Assimilation to the in-group



“Assimilation allows existing oppressive ideologies to continue. X [Historically White Institution] opts for assimilation strategies rather than allowing students and staff to become active participants in transforming this space”

politics of belonging

“[Such] conditions left me feeling as a newcomer that my voice could not penetrate a culture so 'sutured' and unchallenged by those acting as my mentors. With or without the [programme], I know that many young black staff feel that, when transformation is pursued, the integration of black staff is problematized as opposed to the environments that they are entering into”



“I chose to silence myself a lot of the time to avoid conflict and to integrate into the department and find some sort of sense of belonging. While I became an easier colleague to work with (as mentioned by many of my colleagues), I felt that I had compromised my own values, ethics, and beliefs. My sense of belonging increased, but my sense of self diminished”.

STRUCTURAL ACCESS


ACCESS AND SUCCESS

ACCESS TO CHALLENGE




ACCESS TO CHALLENGE

Curriculum theory
Critical University Studies



“There is this implicit expectation that you will have to uphold the values that the university holds without critique in terms of what these values mean to me and how inclusive they are.”



*“In as much as I have not internalized my role as a black academic,
the institution has perhaps not internalized its role
as an institution/system in a specific context.”*

Transformation.....

agential
structural
culture

OF the institutions FOR society

Decolonising the curriculum
(micro, meso, macro)

Decolonising the archive
(local/ global knowledge)

STRUCTURAL ACCESS

= equitable selection process

ACCESS AND SUCCESS

= developmental support

= meritocratic performance management/ reward

ACCESS TO CHALLENGE



the equity agenda

“the intellectual and academic
decolonization,
de-racialization and de-gendering
of the inherited intellectual spaces of
South Africa’s universities”

(Higher Education of South Africa, 2011, p. 11).

“futile”

“chipping away at that rock face”

Higher Education of South Africa. (2011). *A Generation of Growth. Proposal for a National Programme to Develop the Next Generation of Academics for South African Higher Education*. Pretoria: Higher Education of South Africa.

politics of representation

“a tight rope”

*“the reality is
uncomfortable even
for those in power
espousing it”*

politics of representation



“It is important to acknowledge not all individuals are activists, such as myself. And therefore, I have not been very inclined to actively challenge the norms at a broader/institutional level”.

“awkward position”

“illegitimate representative”

e/quality

“it is in our self-interests
to ensure that our careers and reputations
are not compromised...

When challenges were made
[it opened] a can of worms.
I was not safe to talk to, I was shunned...
I am told to be careful of
career suicide and boundaries ”

“How do you help when you know the very structures
are set up, [so that even] you do not get heard?”

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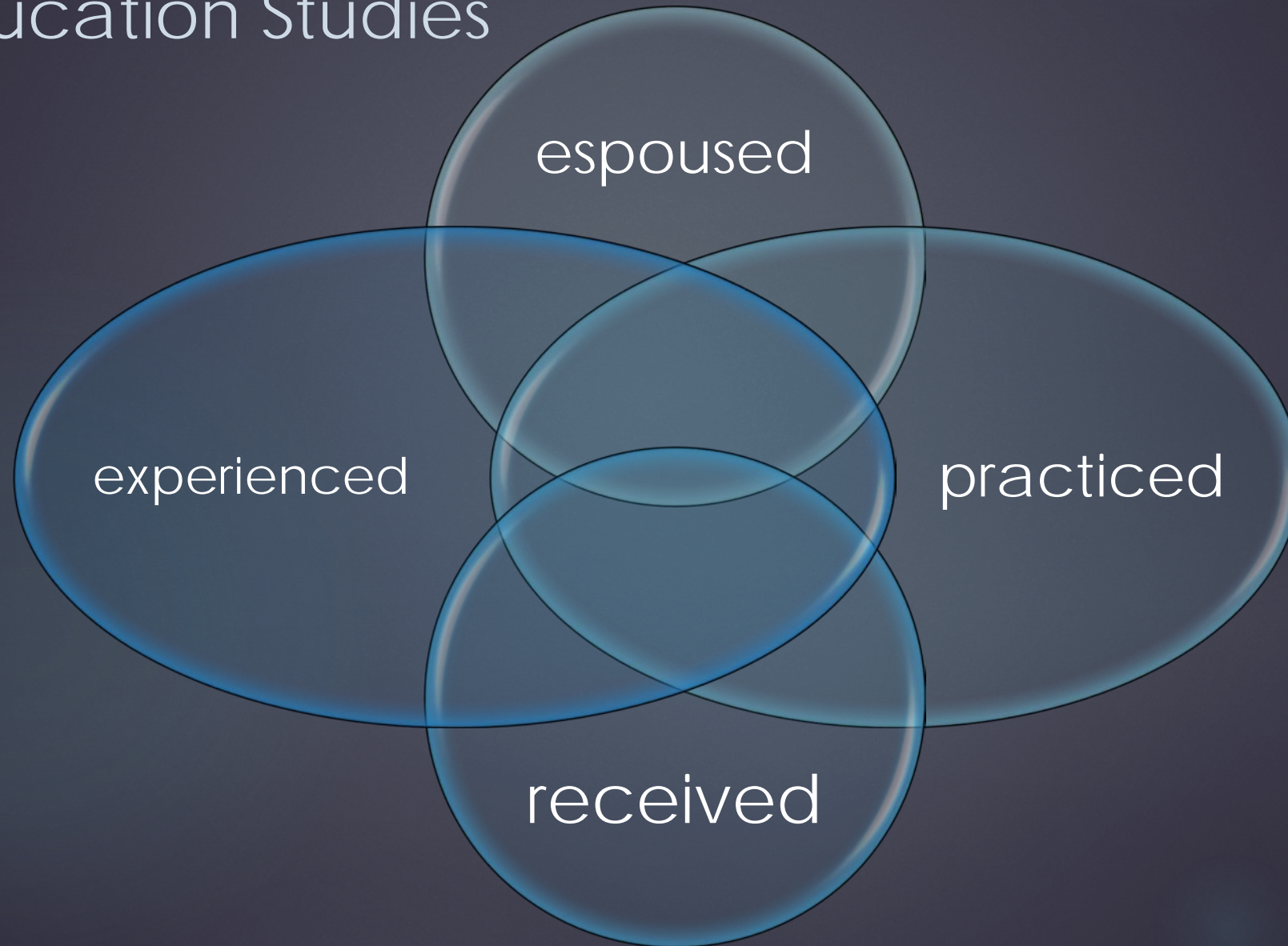
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Assessment as a Site for Research in Higher Education Studies



Critical Higher Education Studies....

raise consciousness
in the individual agent
(academic/ assessor / support/ student/ administrator)
to affect larger cultures and structures
within and beyond
the bubble of classroom
& what can be done to challenge/ improve.

Queen's MSc in Higher Education